

Clyde J. Hart, Jr., Administrator, Maritime Administration

First of all, there are a couple of people that we need to thank, I personally need to thank. One, of course, is John Graykowski for his leadership in this conference. But there are certain people here from MARAD who really need to be thanked. Ms. Maggie Blum who is the Associate Administrator for Ports and her staff, Bob Christensen, John Pisani, Pat Randall and Ann Sanborn. There are probably several others but those people really have spent long hours and long days putting this together and any success that we up here take credit for is due to the staff who really dug into the trenches and put this thing together.

As one of the newest of Secretary Slater's ONE DOT team, I am very excited to be here. I am very excited that all of you were able to come. We've got people here, vessel operators, pilots, shippers, terminal operators, people from the ports, people from the trucking industry, the railroads, from labor, from the dredging industry and it's very exciting to see all of you in one room.

We are here to have a full and honest discussion of all the issues from all points of view, hopefully, leading to a vision statement which we can all support. I believe that the Secretary had it right in that we need a comprehensive vision statement and a comprehensive picture of where we want the Maritime Transportation System to be going into the next millennium.

We had the seven Regional Listening Sessions. We invited as many people as we could to come. We'll probably undoubtedly have more after this. This is an ongoing process. We hope to get from all of you some idea of where we need to go as a nation so that we can have a competitive, safe and environmentally secure Marine Transportation System.

I would like to speak about infrastructure and competitiveness. One of the things that you will see is an audiovisual presentation right after my comments. There are some factors that you should be aware of and need to keep in mind as you are watching that presentation.

The substantial growth in domestic and foreign shipping, that, as the Secretary said could double, even triple by 2020.

Trade patterns are shifting, as manufacturing seems to be moving South and West in the world. What does that mean to trade patterns for the United States, both the East Coast and the West Coast.

Recreational use of waterways is increasing. I visited both Oakland California and the Port of New York in the last month. And in both of those ports, there are now significant environmental and recreational components. Use of the waterways is changing, and we need to be aware of that.

Innovative technology, some of which we can only anticipate: vessel design changes, increases in size and speed, of course, the new 6,600 TEU's, the fast ship concept of 40, 50-knot ships. Even the 6,000 TEU ships doing 23, 25 knots.

Deterioration of our infrastructure. Our infrastructure is old. It needs replacement, or we're just not going to have any trade.

Trade is the engine of our growth in America. And we must have trade. We need to increase trade. We can dredge every one of our harbors to 50, 60 feet, but if you don't have the roads, if we don't have the rail access on the other side, it's not going to do us any good. The goods will just stay at the port. We need to think about working on those intermodal connectors that are vitally important to the Marine Transportation System.

In conclusion, I look forward to a great couple of days. I will be here for the whole conference. I've bought all the notepaper I could find. I am looking forward to everybody giving it their best effort for the next two-and-a-half days, and let's make this the step so that in 10, 20 years we can look back on it and say, 'yeah, that was a pretty good conference and that it got us where we needed to go.' Thanks very much for coming and I look forward to meeting all of you. Thank you.